

# Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

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Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com

Thursday, Aug. 13, 2020

## JAWbreaker mastermind could stay behind bars until trial

By Brittney Lofthouse

James Steele has been in and out of jail since 2017. In 2018, he

posted a \$1.5 million bond and was required to wear an ankle monitor after being arrested as part of the

Macon County Sheriff's Office Operation JAWbreaker.

• See JAWBREAKER page 16

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## MC Schools Virtual Academy to start Aug. 24

*In-person teachers to do double duty*

By Brittney Lofthouse

When schools in North Carolina begin next week, nearly 1 million students will be starting the school year completely remotely.

While North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper announced in July schools could operate under Plan B – which allowed for in-person instruction, he also said that if districts elected to choose Plan C – fully remotely – they could.

In total, more than 800,000 of the 1.4 million public education students attending district schools will start without in-person instruction.

Looking at WNC schools in the same 2A conference as Macon County Schools, Macon County

• See VIRTUAL page 18

## The Milky Way shines in the night sky



David Snyder, captured this shot of the Milky Way over Whiteside Mountain from his deck in Cashiers.

## MCS Virtual Academy MS students are offered a 'classroom'

For parents who have opted for the Macon County School Virtual Academy due to COVID-19, but don't really know how they will manage it, The Mountain Retreat and Learning Center is ready to help – at least for students in grades 6-8.

Beginning Monday, Aug. 24, The Mountain is poised to accommodate up to 12 middle school MCS Virtual Academy students on their campus.

The school week would be Monday through Thursday, 9a to 4p and run through Friday, Oct. 16.

• See CLASSROOM page 18

## Drive-in entertainment a maybe at PAC

Humankind is living in a new world, the world of Covid-19 Chaos, the 2020 version of the Twilight Zone. Everyone misses gathering together to enjoy a meal, a church

service, a concert or a play.

Now, the Highlands Performing Arts Center has an idea to fix all that ... a drive-in theater.

"This would enable us to

show the National Theatre of London encore productions, Great Art on Screen documentaries, movies from the Playhouse,

• See DRIVE-IN page 12

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### The importance of co-existing

I've had a bird problem. It started last summer when I went to fire my large gas kiln.

After loading the kiln, I turned to access a small shed where I keep some 75 firebrick that make up the door to the kiln. The bricks are stacked to enclose the kiln opening before firing.

As I began the stacking process, I realized I had failed to close the doors to the shed since the last firing. And there I spotted the problem, in the upper shelf where I store gloves, insulation and other materials related to the process. A Carolina Wren had built a nest and was staring me in the face as if to say, 'what are you doing here, can't you see I'm busy?'

We found an accommodation. The bird parents raised their baby birds as I would carefully retrieve my firebricks to fire my kiln several times in their process. After the birds flew the coop, I remembered to keep the shed doors closed.

It wasn't over. About a month ago I was working in my studio making cof-



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

fee mugs. The front door was open and a Carolina Wren flew in, probably the same bird. I stopped my work and helped the bird find its way out. I did that a couple of times. Later in the afternoon I returned to the studio to find the bird had brought in twigs, leaves and even moss and placed them in plies on a shelf next to my electric kiln. The shelf is just inside the studio door.

I grabbed the mess they were making and threw it outside and shouted to the birds to go away. I thought that was the end of it. I didn't return to my studio for a couple of days, but when I did, I discovered a beautiful domed nest in a plastic box of supplies.

I realized then that I was an unwilling participant of another Carolina Wren breeding and hatching season. Sure enough a couple of days later, the Wren was sitting on the nest looking at me as if to say, 'go about your business and I will do mine.'

She sat there for days as I gingerly came and went from my studio. Then one evening I saw three fuzzy, big yellow-beaked chicks in the nest staring at me as if I were a parent bringing them food.

For about a week, if I was working in my studio, the Wrens would make a fussing noise outside my front door when they wanted to feed their babies. I would stop my work and go to the back room where she could not see me. It took a moment for her to feed her chicks, and then I could return to work.

One afternoon this past week I was

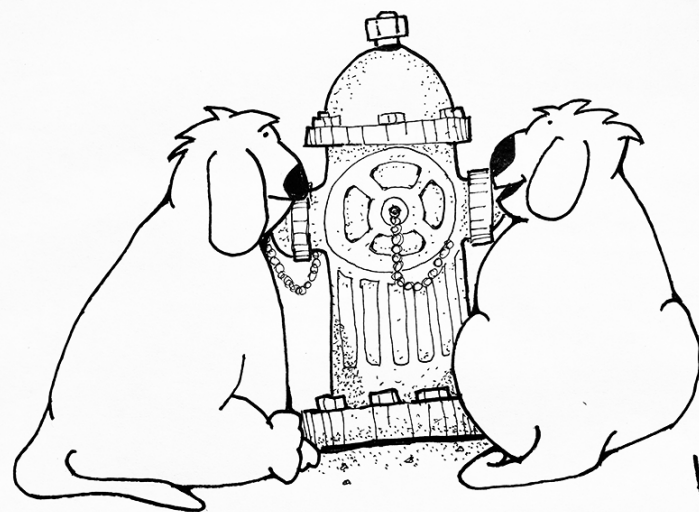
•See MAYOR page 16

## • NOTICE •

The Highlands Newspaper office at 256 Oak Street is temporarily closed. We are going through some renovations and updates, and plan to be back open in a few weeks with new and improved facilities.

In the meantime, we are working out of our home office. To contact us – as always – please email [highlandseditor@aol.com](mailto:highlandseditor@aol.com) or call 828-200-1371.

## • HIC'S VIEW •







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HIC

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## • WEATHER •

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78°F 65°F	75°F 65°F	75°F 62°F	77°F 61°F
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# • LETTERS •

## Crane's diatribe is just too much to stomach

Dear Editor,

With all due respect to Danny Crane, his letter in the Aug. 6 edition may have been the most ridiculous thing I have seen published in this newspaper. His examples of individuals who can't wear masks are so far-fetched that his point (if he has one) is obscured by them.

Certainly, accosting strangers to harangue them for wearing or not wearing a mask is not appropriate. But to say that there is no evidence that masks curtail the spread of any disease is just hogwash. Perhaps the next time Mr. Crane has surgery it would be OK for his surgeon to eschew a mask and cough and sneeze all over his open incision.

Masks protect us from people who are infected by stopping the virus from getting past the mask. Can it be any simpler than that?

Mr. Crane appears to be someone who feels it is his right as an American to not wear a mask. I'll bet he doesn't feel quite as charitable toward folks who feel it is their right as Americans to burn the Flag or kneel during the National Anthem.

You seem to be a Patriot Mr. Crane, so act like one and wear a mask.

Jim Dyal  
 Highlands, NC  
 • See LETTERS page 7



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- ✓ and **job opportunities**  
in my community.

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**...LETTERS** continued  
from page 5

## Suicides In America

Dear Editor,

Suicides in America are at an all-time high. For the first time in the middle-age group, it's growing faster in women than it is in men. In the 10 to 24 old's, it is the 2nd leading cause of death. There is an average of 22 suicides a day by military veterans. 120 suicides a day are caused by prescription drugs - pain pills, OxyContin.

Suicides are directly related to depression which is also growing in America. It may be drug and alcohol addiction. It may be a divorce, financial problems, young people being bullied at school. It has also been proven the more a young person is on social media; their I-phone or I-pad, the more likely they are to develop depression. They may have 2000 thousand friends on Facebook and not one friend that they have a personal relationship. We were made for relationships. Our happiness is directly related to our relationships with others.

Coddling kids today is not working. It's the "don't do anything that may hurt their self-esteem." Everyone gets a trophy for participating. We don't let little Johnny fall where he can learn take the hard knocks and keep going. 30% of the kids entering college today are already on prescription medicine. They are so fragile any little thing can cause them to drop by the wayside. This is also a cause of depression. Too many kids don't have the satisfaction of knowing they can do it on their own. We need to let them fall down where they can learn to get up.

This is why I want to share with you the "power of gratitude." The positive psychology movement has recognized gratitude as the most important strength and virtue that enables a person to live well. It has the highest connection to mental health and happiness. As long ago as 70 BC, Rome's greatest orator and statesman, Cicero said, "Gratitude is the greatest of all virtues. It unlocks the fullness of life."

It is impossible to feel grateful and depressed at the same time. Over 200 suicidal patients with severe depression problems were asked to write down everything they were grateful for. The results were amazing. As many as 90% had positive improvement and many are living a positive life today. It has also been scientifically proven to be effective in treating people with addiction problems and mental problems.

• See LETTERS page 16

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## The Best of Times...the Worst of Times

The world, as we know it, has changed significantly, as we all are aware. With the pandemic, protesters, (peaceful and otherwise), a dust storm from Africa, killer hornets, and now an earthquake - this past weekend felt here in Highlands - makes one wonder what the heck is going on in this odd year of 2020!

Hatred and division seem rampant,

kids are no longer allowed in schools, social gatherings of friends and families are limited, churches are closed to worshipers who are trying to make sense of it all, gyms are closed so stress relief is limited, businesses are failing, and residents in cities are going to bed at night to the sounds of gunshots in neighborhoods that were deemed safe only a few months ago. This does paint a bleak

picture filled with uncertainty and strife.

What does this have to do with real estate and specifically our plateau? Everything!

We have transitioned from a stagnant buyer's market in March to a booming seller's market now. When a good property becomes available in our MLS it is under contract that day or the next, sometimes with multiple offers placed on it. We have never seen such a surge of people wanting to escape high-density areas, protestors and out of control situations. Hence, the surge in sales in our area. We went from 753 active listings on January 1, 2020 with average days on market being 399 to 486 active homes as of August 10, 2020.

Buyers realize what a great small town we are with gorgeous scenery, friendly people, great restaurants and shopping, and we seem to be a safe haven away from stress.



**Pat Allen, BIC**  
Pat Allen Realty Group  
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Lifestyle and peace of mind matters now more than ever.

If you are considering selling your property, there has never been a better time than now to do so. We are inundated with calls, emails, and masked buyers stopping by. If you need to make a life-change we are here to help.

• Pat Allen is owner of Pat Allen Realty Group and a Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist and is also certified in Resort and Second home properties. Her

firm was recently selected as a Leading Real Estate Company of the World. She is consistently a top producer and award-winning broker on the plateau. Visit her on the web at Pat Allen Realty Group.com, call 828-526-8784, or 828-200-9179. The office is conveniently located at 295 Dillard Road with a second location at 5121 Cashiers Road at the entrance to Wildcat Cliffs Country Club.

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## Community asked to step up for Eckerd Living Center residents

The residents and staff at Highlands local skilled nursing care facility, the Eckerd Living Center, need help!

Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the fact that the Eckerd Living Center is a skilled nursing care facility and not an Assisted Living Center, the residents cannot leave the complex, nor can family members visit even if they are six feet apart in the garden.

The residents are sad, confused, frustrated and bored and the staff is doing everything it can think of to help.

For one thing, since most activities, including dining, are restricted, residents are spending most of their time in their rooms. Consequently, there are residents

who could really use a television to break up the monotony and keep them connected to the outside world - even if just through game shows and Lifetime movies.

The facility provides cable service, but residents provide their own TV. Any flat screen TVs that can be donated would be greatly appreciated.

Also, residents and staff are always are thrilled to get extra garden items and of course sweet treats, baked goods and pizza as well as prepared subs, bagels and cream cheese, cakes, cookies - anything that speaks of non-institutional food.

However, any food items brought to the facility must be prepared in a commercial kitchen, as

evidenced by the packaging. No home-cooked meals or goodies can be accepted.

To provide a lunch, please put the resident's name on it and take it to the center by 11:30 a.m. To provide a dinner, do the same, but make sure it's there by 4:30 p.m.

There isn't a place to store the food, so please bring it the day it's meant for and close to the lunch or dinner times indicated.

The Eckerd Living Center is located adjacent to the Highlands Cashiers Hospital on US 64 east between Highlands and Cashiers.

Drop off times for non-perishable items can be 7am-6pm. TVs can't be larger than 37 inches and 40 lbs.

- Kim Lewicki

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# Come Enjoy the Good Life!



Located in the prestigious Big Bear Pen area In-town in Highlands, this stately yet elegant home was built with attention to every detail. Solid construction is prevalent throughout and custom accents are notable in every direction.

**Offered for \$1,250,000. MLS 91885**



Surreal, majestic, panoramic mountain views await you at the crest of this breathtaking +/-16 acre property. Build an estate home or develop the land w/mountain cottages. A 60-gallon/minute well & underground utilities ease development angst. Seller is licensed NC real estate broker.

**Offered for \$575,000. MLS 90278**



Each bedroom of this 4-bedroom lakefront home has its own bathroom, plus two half baths. Designed to allow for privacy on multiple levels, this home is on the market for the first time since being custom constructed in 2008. A large den, informal dining room and kitchen, comprise the first floor. The second floor has a great room and game/dining room as well as the first master suite.

**Offered for \$995,000. MLS 91068**



Sometimes a home is so unique it becomes a piece of art! This architecturally significant Jim Fox home is a classic with angles & windows that frame the mountain view & lovely grounds & gardens below. An open floor plan allows gatherings in front of the massive fireplace, dining next to a cascading wall of windows & light while the "chef" in the kitchen preps or the host makes cocktails at the wet bar in the large great room. Located within the gates of Wildcat Ridge with beautiful homes!

**Offered for \$1,999,000. MLS 94257**



Dramatic mountain views abound from every direction & room from this one level beautiful home! Gaze at the North GA mountains from the kitchen & enjoy views of the NC and TN mountains from the decks. Large decks showcase layered mountain views with a separate and shaded dining area. The open floor plan enables gatherings by the stone fireplace while the updated kitchen with an island makes entertaining fun!

**Offered for \$549,900. MLS 94266**



Fantastic opportunity to own a building in a PRIME section of Main Street, known as Nancy's Fancy's & The Exchange! The building runs front to back on Main and Oak Street with a courtyard flower garden and a side deck. There is an apartment upstairs-now used to store clothes-and an apartment is where the Exchange Men's Store is in the rear. The possibilities are great!

**Offered for \$1,800,000. MLS 94303**



**Julie Osborn,**  
**SFR, SRES, MBA**  
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Wildcat CCC

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**Pat Allen,**  
**SFR, CLHMS**  
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# Covering the Plateau

## Old Edwards Club



Located behind the gate of Highlands Cove at Old Edwards Club! 778 Highlands Cove Drive is a charming English Garden Cottage. This cottage offers an open concept floor plan with cathedral post and beam ceilings, wood floors, stacked stone fireplace, chef's kitchen, and a family room. Master on the main level. Long range mountain view of Chimney Rock The terrace level offers two ensuite oversized bedrooms and family room all with access to the terrace level deck. Membership to Old Edwards Club is not mandatory. Membership is subject to acceptance. Membership is not being sold with this home.

**\$1,180,000 • MLS#93424**

## Lake Glenville



This 4.5+ acres is located on a quiet cove and offers amazing views of Lake Glenville and the Great Smoky Mountains. A 20-foot deeded lake access is sold with the lot and walking distance. Large building envelope in the center for privacy and views. The estate size lot located off of North Norton, not far from Highlands, Cashiers, the front gates of Trillium, Mountain Top, Old Edwards Club and Glen Cove.

**\$315,000 • MLS #93741**



**Darlene Conley, ABR,SRS, CHMLS**  
Broker  
darlene@patallenrealtygroup.com

## Old Edwards Club



This is an easy to build on lot, as it gradually slopes up to a large flat building envelope. Buyer has the opportunity to customize their back deck to take full advantage of the view of the 12th fairway/green on the Old Edwards Club Golf Course! The property line has a soft running stream which only enhances the charm of the lot. There is a possible winter view of Shortoff Mountain. Great location within Old Edwards Club @ Highlands Cove as it will have great access the club house at OEC and Glen Cove amenities. Location of Highlands Cove is 6 miles from downtown Highlands and 4 miles from Cashiers Crossroads.

**\$225,000 • MLS# 91423**

## Cullasaja Club



Located inside the gated community of Cullasaja Club, this lot offer long range layered view. Cullasaja Club 72 par Arnold Palmer Designed golf course integrates the natural beauty of the land, Lake Ravenel and the Cullasaja River with challenging play. The community caters to the high energy of its members with a variety of activities, tennis, croquet, fitness class, lap pool and workout facilities. Home ownership is made easy with the HOA Resident Services program. For those who work from home Cullasaja offers high speed internet. Come take a look today!

**\$388,000 • MLS#93477**

## Old Edwards Club



This large lot offers long range layered mountain views and a view of the Glen Cove's par three golf course, The Saddle. David Bock Builders has a perfect floor plan for this lot. It offers a master on the main and porches which take in the amazing view. Terrace level with family room and guest bedrooms. As part of a planned community, Highlands Cove at Old Edwards Club offer 24/7 manned gate; high-speed internet; paved road; private water and sewer. Membership to Old Edwards Club and Glen Cove is not required. Membership is not included but may be applied for directly at OEC.

**\$395,000 • MLS#93731**

## Scaly Mountain



This cute 3-story home lives much larger than its two bedrooms. Hard wood floors & tongue and groove ceilings only add to the charm of this home. There is a screen porch, covered sitting porch, a light filled entry sunroom, wood-burning stove, patio, 3 bathrooms and loft. For those who are looking for a home with rental potential, this home is a must see.

**\$450,000 • MLS#93074**



**Pat Allen,**  
SFR, CLHMS



*Pat Allen*



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## ALL ABOUT BOOKS

## • INK PENN •

## The books in my books—part two

My cozy mysteries always include a book club meeting where the group discusses a book I've read and enjoyed. That's right, I don't use a book for that scene unless I've read it first. I'm not quite that strict about the other books or characters I mention along the way. I've read plenty of the titles that come up, but not all of them.

Take my first book, where the final scene is a dinner party a la an Agatha Christie mystery. Leta, my main character, asks her guests to come dressed as their favorite mystery character. Barring that, she says they can come in fancy dress. All of her friends oblige and show up in costume—some more elaborate than others. I hope you have your pen and paper at the ready. You may want to add a few books to your TBR list.

Leta decides to come as Tuppence from Agatha Christie's Tommy & Tuppence mysteries. For that, all she requires is a long velvet dress with a 1920s look, and for fun, she adds a fascinator. I did finally read "The Secret Adversary," the first in that series, and recently I watched the BBC movie of the book. I've yet to read an Agatha Raisin mystery, even though another guest comes dressed as that character created by M.C. Beaton. Again, that costume is pretty easy—just a fancy evening dress.

The owner of the village tearoom comes as Hercule Poirot, complete with the signature mustache—a slightly more elaborate outfit. I've seen plenty of Poirot shows on TV and at the movies and have two of the books on hand, but have yet to read either. Next comes a guest attired as Dr. Ruth Galloway, the forensic archaeologist in Elly Griffith's mystery series. With her white lab coat and few well placed skeletal bones, she's a hit. Those books I have read.

As she refers to herself as Miss Marple, it was only fitting for Belle, the octogenarian in the group, to come dressed a bit frumpily complete with knitting needles. Again, another series I've seen on TV but haven't read. We've seen so many that my husband and I debate which actress plays



Kathy Manos Penn

the best Miss Marple.

Joanne Fluke's Hannah Swensen series comes to life when a mother and daughter duo arrives—one dressed as the chef brandishing a rolling pin; the other outfitted as Swensen's cat Moishe. I must admit I attempted to read the first in the series and couldn't get into it.

Laughter erupts when the next guest arrives in a rumpled raincoat. And, yes, I watched Columbo on Sunday nights. Didn't you? The most elaborate costume prize goes to a neighbor dressed as Sherlock because she adds a fake nose. Her husband comes as Dr. Watson. I've read tons of more modern Sherlock Holmes pastiches, like those by Anthony Horowitz, but I'm not sure I've ever read the original. As you probably have, I've seen plenty of movies, dating back to those in black and white plus today's livelier versions.

It strikes me as I write this list that most of the characters are British, except for Hannah Swensen who lives in Minnesota and Columbo. The local yoga instructor comes as the only other American—Nancy Drew.

So, there you have it, another slate of mysteries you may want to add to your list. If not, rest assured, I have more to share

• See INK PENN page 16



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## Macon County Reports Fourth Death Related to COVID-19

A Macon County resident diagnosed with COVID-19 has died. The person was over the age of 65 and had underlying health conditions. To protect the family's privacy, no further information will be released about this patient.

"The family and loved ones of this individual are in our thoughts and prayers. As we head back to school, please continue to practice the 3Ws and be mindful of those that are higher risk," stated Kathy McGaha, Macon County Health Director.

Mrs. McGaha continued, "We can make a difference by wearing a mask, washing your hands, and staying 6 feet from

others. Continue to practice social distancing and limit your trips outside your home to help to slow the spread of COVID-19."

As of 8:30 a.m., Aug. 11, there are 38 lab-confirmed COVID positive inpatients in Mission Health hospitals; 33 are at Mission Hospital; 1 at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital; 4 at Mission Hospital McDowell.

As of press time there are 481 COVID cases in Macon County; 69 in Highlands.

The Health Dept. also said there have been 26 positives that aren't included in the county's total of positive cases because they are not permanent residences of the county.

...DRIVE-IN continued from page 1



This is a drone shot of a similar set-up at Western Carolina University.

special pre-recorded live pop concerts (that aren't available on the internet), church services, open mic night, children's storytelling events, lectures and so much more, all viewed safely from your car," said PAC executive director Mary Adair Trumbly. "We may also partner with our fabulous restaurants to offer 'Dinner and a Movie.'"

The concept involves a portable and inflatable screen that just takes a short time to set up and take down, which means it's also ideal for transporting to other locations, said Trumbly. The sound system works through the car radio or a cell phone.

"Our research has shown, we could start at dusk, with viewing getting better as the sun goes down. For better viewing, the screen would be elevated on a stage of sorts

which could become a place for outdoor lectures, church services, storytelling and open mic nights," she said.

All PAC needs is the equipment – the screen, projection equipment, and the sound system.

PAC stands to lose \$92,000 this year due to COVID-19 restrictions so it is looking for \$25,000 in donations to make "Parking at the PAC" a reality.

"This will be something that can be used now and far into the future," said Trumbly.

Log onto [www.highlandspac.org](http://www.highlandspac.org) to take a survey. Or email [HighlandsPACnc@gmail.com](mailto:HighlandsPACnc@gmail.com) to let them know if you like the idea ... or if you want to make a donation!

– Kim Lewicki



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# • WORD MATTER •

## On Divisiveness



**Bud Katz**

in and deeply conflicted ideas about race, and gender.

Politics flourishes by fomenting conflict among different constituencies of Americans. The parties thrive on dividing the American people into some notion of 'us and them,' blocks of red and blue, conservative and liberal. Rich and poor? Yeah, that, too. They deliberately and dishonestly stoke fires of fear, anger and misunderstanding among

Americans who, again, in my opinion, have more in common than confrontational campaigns might suggest.

Many of us cherish the notion that America is special, exceptional, if you will, and that we're not only capable of going it alone in the world, but that we'd be better off without, as George Washington put it in his farewell address, 'foreign entanglements.' We might be able to sustain that idea for a while, but American businesses need marketplaces beyond our borders. We want goods at low prices, and surprisingly, almost ninety percent of us would love to travel to foreign lands if we had the resources to do so.

Some of us are capable of engaging with people who don't think or believe as we do on every subject or issue. We can find common ground, agree to disagree, and maintain relationships that are actually

• See WORD MATTER page 16



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# • FINANCIAL MATTERS •

## Are we really recovering?

I just returned from five weeks at my family cabin in Highlands. It was a great time of rest in my favorite town. Fortunately, I was also able to “work from home” while I was there.

Despite my efforts to escape, we’re still in the middle of a global pandemic. A large portion of our economy is still closed and we’re in a global recession. We have the worst civil unrest since 1968, we’re 3 months away from what is likely to be the most contentious Presidential election in history, we have the lowest interest rates in history, we’ve added \$3 trillion to our debt (with another 3 coming) and we’re increasingly be at odds with our greatest adversary - China.

**But the market, as represented by the S&P 500 is only 3% away from an all-time high!**

I know this is cliché, but if you had told me last August that a

year later we would be where we are, I would have told you...well you can probably guess what I would have said.

Our economy in the U.S. just shrank in the 2nd quarter by about 8% in real terms. Many analysts, like Goldman Sachs for example, were predicting this type of massive reduction. They are now forecasting a 6% increase for the 3rd quarter.

This would be the largest single quarter increase in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) ever.

**But, will this hold true?**

**Answer - it better.**

We know the market tends to look 6 – 18 months ahead and If it’s right, the economy will recover much sooner than some may believe. Right now, though, there’s no doubt the market has decoupled from the current economic reality and is betting the government will continue to provide the massive stimulus necessary to keep things afloat until we have a vaccine.

However, there may be a limit to how long the money printing



**Michael P Henderson,**  
**CFP® CKA®**  
**Founder/Wealth Advisor**  
**Certified Financial**  
**Planner™ practitioner**

can go on. Normally, when individuals and corporations experience financial difficulties, there is usually a progression of things that happen. They usually spend down their cash reserves first. Once that’s gone, they turn to credit. Then, when the creditors are no longer willing to lend, they begin to sell assets. How long it will be before we as a nation get to this point, I don’t know. Which

asset do we sell first? California, New York? Alaska?

While there is usually a limit to how much any individual and corporation can borrow to stay afloat, there are academics who believe we can borrow indefinitely because we can simply print more money to cover our debt payments. Keep in mind, Congress is already struggling to pass the second round.

The market is also starting to predict inflation. Back in 2008, there were many people, including me, who believed the Federal Reserve’s actions would lead to inflation. It didn’t. This time how-

ever, I believe it will. The money flooding the economy is going into the hands of people who will spend it, creating a higher “velocity” of money. We’re already seeing the signs of this with the price of gold soaring and the value of the dollar plummeting. We’ll see if that plays out over the long term.

Lastly, my heart goes out to those of you who are struggling because of pandemic. Unfortunately, “30 days to flatten the curve” turned into 175+ (with more on the horizon). I know for many it’s a tough and uncertain time. Even though there are future risks, I believe the government did the right thing by helping folks who needed it. But to truly recover, we must get to the point where we can live with the virus (with or without a vaccine) so the nation and the world can get back to work.

*• The opinions expressed in this material are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual.*

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## Mountain Life Properties of Landmark Realty Group joins forces with Golf Life Navigators

Golf enthusiasts from near and far, now have a liaison when exploring home opportunities in the Western North Carolina mountains. Mountain Life Properties of Landmark Realty Group has been designated by Florida based, Golf Life Navigators (GLN,) as their sole Real Estate firm for golf community referrals.

Based in South Florida with an active presence across the U.S., GLN efficiently eases the process of determining the precise golf and country club member-

ship choices for golfers looking to retire, relocate or engage in the “snowbird” life. Created in 2014 by grass-root PGA Professionals, club managers and membership directors, GLN guides discerning golfers, club seekers and property buyers through an in-depth analysis and insights befitting their unique lifestyle desires and budgets.

For consumers seeking homes in the Cashiers/Highlands market, they will now be able to utilize GLN’s ProGuide3 ques-

tionnaire to filter search multiple club communities and membership options in the area. Once they receive their Best-Matched clubs, consumers can then take the next step by connecting with one of Mountain Life Properties’ Golf Certified Real Estate Agents to research homes for sale in and around their Best-Matches.

To learn more about Mountain Life Properties of LandmarkRG, please visit [www.highlandsandcashiers.com](http://www.highlandsandcashiers.com)

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## Center for Life Enrichment offering classes

Social isolation can take a toll on emotional and physical well-being. To counteract the adverse effects of spending too much time alone, it's crucial to find ways to continue working, learning and exploring each day.

The Center for Life Enrichment is offering classes to help you use your Apple products.

Our Apple instructor Lorraine Smith holds a BS in Financial Management from Clemson University and has 20 years of experience in technology instruction, focusing on the needs of seniors the past six years.

An Apple Certified Business Partner, she will be teaching Photo Editing for Apple Computers on Wednesday, August 19 from 10:30-3:30.

Have you ever wanted to create a coffee table book, calendar or other items with photos? Do you need to organize your photos into albums? These are

perfect projects keep busy during quarantine. You will learn how to "fix" your photos, including light, balance, color and cropping. Learn the 1/3 Rule on photography. Bring old photos and your iPhone or iPad so the generations to come will enjoy them.

Cost is \$75 for members/\$85 for non-members. Make sure have a charged device and your Apple passwords.

Today many of us are choosing to spend more time at home due to the pandemic and are looking for ways to handle our necessary day to day chores while maintaining social distancing. Using technology can be beneficial in many ways. To stay on top of your health many use telehealth services—telecommunication technologies that deliver virtual medical, health and education services. Social networking apps are great to help beat the loneliness and isolation.

On Wednesday, August 26 Lorraine Smith will be back to teach the class Best Apps and Websites for Seniors from 10:30-3:30.

Learn about apps that will help you stay sharp, focused, and connected to what's important in your life. Bring a charged device and your Apple passwords.

All computer classes are being held in the CLE lecture hall so that proper social distancing can be observed. Call 526-8811 to register or visit the CLE website at [www.clehighlands.com](http://www.clehighlands.com).

Spaces are still available in CLE's upcoming cooking and dining events: Thursday, September 17 join Chef Andrew Figel at ... on the Verandah for Favorites Through the Years and Thursday, S

September 24 Enjoy A Delectable Afternoon at Lakeside: Cooking Demo and Lunch. Cost for each event is \$50 for members/\$60 for nonmembers. Call 526-8811 to register.



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## ...WORD MATTER from page 13

enriched by our differences of opinion. Others can't do this. By choice, they seek out comfortable bubbles filled with like-minded folks who tend to feed off of the ideas and beliefs they share and the enemies they see 'out there.' There's not much these bubble-dwellers care to consider that doesn't conform with their worldview. Unfortunately, these are typically the loudest voices, the most self-righteous and uncompromising among us.

We are about to move into the last two months before we again get to participate in what we're always told is the most im-

portant election in modern history. The only thing I know for sure is that while it may, in fact, be important, it will definitely be highly contentious and will be disappointingly foul in terms of the tone of the discourse in the runup to the actual vote. The election process itself will be attacked, the candidates will both be on the attack, as will their surrogates, and we down here on the ground will be bruised and battered by the negative energy.

It's true; our nation was born into this kind of divisiveness. Sadly, it seems we are destined to reside within its confines for at least the foreseeable future.

## ...MAYOR from 2

working in the studio and heard a commotion and noticed the Wren parents and fuzzy chicks hopping and chirping around the studio. I knew the drill, I had to leave while the parents coaxed their youngsters to fly away. I left the studio for a day. When I returned, the nest was empty and the chicks had flown the coop. I repossessed my studio.

This experience reminds me that we live in a beautiful, yet shared environment. Let's not forget that our actions; building, cutting trees, moving about, etc. do impact other living creatures. This plateau is not just for us humans, it's for all the marvelous plants and animals. After all, that is what makes it so unique and special.

I will continue to keep my doors open.

## ...LETTERS continued from page 7

Focusing on gratitude will increase your joy and passion in life, elevate your feelings of self-worth, lift your mood, cut in half your risk of depression, reduce anxiety and stress, lower blood pressure, and increase overall better health.

Willie Nelson said, "When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around."

Zig Ziglar, the great motivational speaker and author said, "The greatest source of happiness is the ability to be grateful at all times."

Oprah Winfrey said, "Be

thankful for what you have, you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never have enough."

Gratitude is one of the sweetest shortcuts to finding peace and happiness. It is one of the most medicinal emotions we can feel.

Keep a daily "Gratitude Journal." Every day write down a few things that happened to you that day you are grateful for. It will change your life.

**Kenny Youmans**  
Highlands, NC

## ...INK PENN continued from page 11

— many more. I haven't even touched on the books in Book II in the series—and Book III goes on preorder in August!

• *Author Kathy Manos Penn is a Georgia resident. Find her cozy mysteries on Amazon. Locally, "Lord Banjo the Royal Pooch" is available at Highlands Mountain Paws. Contact her at [inkpenn119@gmail.com](mailto:inkpenn119@gmail.com), and follow her on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/KathyManosPenn.Author/](https://www.facebook.com/KathyManosPenn.Author/).*

## ...JAWBREAKER continued from page 1

Despite the hefty bond and constant monitoring, Steele has managed to rack up a half a dozen new charges since the 2018 arrest, always making bond a few hours later. After an August 3 arrest in Transylvania County, Steele's luck may have finally run out.

Steele is one of three leaders of a well-organized narcotics trafficking operation that was dismantled in 2018. Operation JAWbreaker — an acronym for the organization's leaders, James Steele, Arthur Potts, and Wade Ennis, was the result of months of undercover work and multiagency collaboration that saw 25 arrests for drug trafficking across Western North Carolina and Northern Georgia.

When Steele was arrested last week in Transylvania County for felony possession of Methamphetamine and misdemeanor drug paraphernalia, he was also held on Failure to Appear charges from when he didn't show up for his June court date in Macon County Superior Court. Because he skipped his last court date, Macon County District Attorney Ashley Welch has asked the courts to re-



**James Steele**

voke his \$1.5 million bond.

"Originally, we requested Mr. Steele's bond be revoked in 2018 because he continued to commit (alleged) crimes, and the judge did revoke it, next setting a \$1.5 million bond," said Welch. "Mr. Steele's bondsman chose to post that bond and as of June, Mr. Steele had absconded. Now we have a pending motion to have the latest bond revoked," said Welch.

Steele is scheduled to appear in court on his latest charges on August 27.

Steele wasn't the only member of JAWbreaker arrested last

week in Transylvania County.

Ennis was also booked into the detention center on felony charges of possession of methamphetamine, however Ennis was able to make bond and is scheduled to appear in Transylvania Court on August 27 and in Macon County on charges from Operation JAWbreaker in February 2021.

According to Welch, the lengthy delay in a trial from the 2018 in Macon County for Steele, Ennis and the third member of JAWbreaker Arthur Potts, who has also been arrested multiple times since 2018, is largely due to the defendants right to counsel.

"The defendants have requested continuances multiple times, changing defense attorneys in the process," explained Welch. "Someone coming into the case cold has thousands and thousands of pages of discovery to digest."

In addition to the delay by changing legal counsel, Jury Trials in Macon County are currently delayed due to COVID19 — which has prevented any case to be tried in front of a jury since March.

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# • SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

## Ghost Town In The Sky

**Pastor Dan Robinson**  
Highlands Central Baptist

If you were around Western North Carolina in the 1960s, then you most likely already know about Ghost Town in Maggie Valley, NC.

It predated Disney World, Dollywood and Six Flags. It seems that the only competition was Tweetsie Railroad in Boone, NC. Tweetsie, however, was far enough away so as to present no real challenge.

Ghost Town was unique. One could access it by incline railway or chairlift. The mountain top entertainment included authentic-recreated gunfights in the streets, family friendly saloon shows and even country music at the Red Barn. My Dad was the Choreographer for the musical side of Ghost Town. His responsibility also included the other similar theme parks located in Cherokee (Frontierland) and Six Gun Territory (located in Ocala-Silver Springs, FL). You may well imagine what great fun I had as a young teenager in those days. The good memories still linger. However, that was a long time ago. We could even call those days, "The Glory Days of Ghost Town."

Now, in 2020 Ghost Town really is a Ghost Town. There has been a lot of effort to resurrect that theme park but to date, all efforts have failed. Nonetheless, some (and I have a friend and former Ghost Town fellow- employee in this category) can't seem to move on. They are locked in a 1960s time-war.

This whole thing reminds me of some churches and ministries. They have had by the Grace of God, glory days. The past (seems to them) to be much greater than the present. And they long for the good-ole-days.

This is completely understandable. And anyone who has ever been under the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Revivals and blessings longs to see those days return.

The great news is that our great God is not bound to repeat performances. The Bible says that we see new mercies every day! Our God is limitless in His ongoing creativity. There's much, much more ahead for the follower of Jesus Christ. We don't have to live in the past or try to relive any former glory days.

Our God is the God who is and not the God who was. I hope you will turn to Him today in faith.

I hope that you will open your heart to Jesus Christ. He promises to make all things new.

Well, there certainly was a Ghost Town In The Sky. It's gone now. How much greater is the Christian's home in the sky! That's called Heaven.

Are you going?

## Proverbs 3:5

## • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

John 3:16

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Wednesdays - Supper at 6 p.m.

### COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH

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Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins

Sun.: 9:30am: Sunday School 10:30am: Middle & High School;

10:45am: Child. Program, 10:45am: Worship

Wed.: 5pm Dinner (\$7 adult, \$2 child), 6pm CBC U.

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706.746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447,

Pastor Gary Hewins

Worship: Sun. 9 a.m., with Holy Communion the 1st & 3rd

Sun.; Tues: Community Supper 5:30 followed by Bible Study.

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828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 220 Main Street, Highlands

Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am

Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Choir 5p; Prayer Mtg 6:15p

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

Sun.: Worship 8:30a Adult Ed.: 9:30a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.

Mondays: Men's Prayer Group & Breakfast 8 a.m.

Wed: Choir: 6p

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Sunday: School 9:45a, Worship 11a & 7p, Bible Study 6p

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

### HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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Sundays: Worship: 11

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Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

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Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

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### MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church

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### SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

Sundays: School - 10 a.m.; Worship - 11 a.m. & 7

Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

### SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212

Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

### SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.

Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.

### ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Sept 6-Oct 25- Informal Evening Eucharist: 5:30 p.m.

Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

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Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

### WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers

Sunday School: 10 am, Worship Service: 11 am

## 'Welcome Back Breakfast' for HS Teachers and Staff



Kristy Lewis from Highlands United Methodist prepared breakfast for the teachers and staff at Highlands School, and she and Christine Murphy delivered individual containers that included a breakfast burrito, cookie or pudding cups, muffin, fruit, apple sauce, along with orange juice and water. Though a bit different this school year, the welcome back breakfast is an annual event provided by HUMC. This is one of the many ways we seek to partner and support Highlands School throughout the year. Thanks Kristy and Christine Murphy!

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## ...VIRTUAL continued from page 1

is one of two districts attempting in-person instruction in any form with the rest choosing to opt for virtual learning.

The Macon County Board of Education met Tuesday night to finalize Fall semester plans, which includes discussion of what virtual education in Macon County is going to look like.

With the exception of Highlands, Nantahala and Union Academy, the eight remaining schools in Macon County will attend school on alternating days, four days a week. Half of students will attend on Monday and Wednesday with the other half attending Tuesday and Thursday.

Highlands School is planning a phased re-entry plan to ensure students are familiar with new procedures and social distancing requirements, but plans to have all students who choose to attend school for in-person instruction four days a week.

When Macon County first announced the district's option for Plan C – they anticipated launching the Macon County Virtual Academy as a separate school to operate independently from other schools in the district. However, the number and grade level of students who enrolled did not support that model.

District-wide, about 800 students are currently enrolled in the Virtual Academy, a number that has been fluctuating daily. For Highlands, the last count had about 50 students enrolled in the Virtual Academy with 2 or 3 per class. Seventh grade had the highest number of Virtual Academy enrollment with 10 students enrolled.

While the Virtual Academy will look differently based on each school site, it will primarily be integrated into the normal classroom. Teachers will now be responsible for teaching the students who are in their classroom for in-person instruction, the students who are doing remote learning that day, and any Virtual Academy students assigned to their class.

"We just don't have enough teachers willing to teach virtually," said Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin.

Both remote learning and the Virtual Academy will vary based on school and grade level, however, overall, the school board said students are not expected to be streaming entire days online. While some teachers may elect to stream their lessons via Google Classroom for remote learning or virtual

students, those lessons can also be recorded to view at a later time when best suited for the student.

Meanwhile, in-person students are supposed to get their Ipad's the end of this week and the beginning of next. The first week of school that begins Monday, Aug. 17 will entail teaching students how to use the Ipad, download work while at school so they can do remote work even if Internet isn't available for the days they aren't in school and more.

That will be Friday for all students and either Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday for all in the county except at Highlands, Nantahala and Union Academy which aren't participating in the alternate A or B scenario.

Virtual Academy students are supposed to get their Ipad's by Friday, Aug. 21 with instruction as to use them happening hopefully at their respective schools that day or over the weekend so students and their families are ready for the first day of the Virtual Academy.

Additional information and plans for Virtual Academy families will be distributed this week to families who are currently enrolled. The Virtual Academy is scheduled to begin on August 24.

## ...CLASSROOM continued from page 1

Like the in-person classes at Highlands School, social distancing with all the COVID-19 protocols of mask-wearing, hand washing, etc., would be adhered to while students are on campus.

Each morning, students would set up in the dining hall with their Ipad's to attend the Virtual Academy from 9a to noon. After lunch extracurricular activities will start beginning at 1pm and ending at 3:30p. Pickup is between 3:30p and 4pm.

School supplies and computers for the first part of the day, must be supplied by the families as per the Virtual Academy requirements. Connections to virtual lessons will be through a the robust

wifi network supplied by The Mountain.

The cost would be \$15-\$30 per student per day for the first eight weeks of school which begins Monday, Aug. 24 and runs through Friday, Oct. 16. Students will be required to bring their own lunch and snacks.

"Working parents are having a hard time juggling all the changes that come with virtual learning and are trying to make ends meet while worried that the quality of their kids' education and the quality of their life is at risk. This is how The Mountain can help," said Director Ted Wisniewski.

Afternoon sessions will be a mixture of humanities and outside

activities. For humanities, there will be arts & craft projects with supplies provided, musical opportunities, board games, jewelry making, mindfulness and meditation, computer programming, poetry, rocks and minerals, art history, art, painting and sculpture, herbology, gardening, raising poultry, mushroom hunting, The Basics of Money and Building Wealth, theater and acting. A weekly cooking session is also planned.

Outside activities (weather permitting) will require masks and physical distancing meaning 6 feet from others in and outdoors. When participating in ac-

**• See CLASSROOM page 19**



# • POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

**Highlands Police entries from July 21. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.**

## July 21

• At 9 a.m., officers were called about a case of identity fraud at a business on Keener Road.

## July 27

• At 11:45 a.m., a shoplifting incident was reported at Potpourri on Main Street where a rig valued at \$40 was taken.

## July 28

• At 3:30 p.m., officers were called about breaking and entering of a motor vehicle and larceny of a firearm and a false report to police at a residence on Upper Brushy Face Road where \$750 worth of items were taken including a Ruger 10/22 .22 caliber gun valued at \$200, a wallet and \$551 in cash.

## July 29

• At 2:10 p.m., officers were called about merchandise valued at \$840 was gotten by false pretenses at Reeve's Ace Hardware.

## July 31

• At 10:25 a.m., officers were called about a verbal argument at 200 Main.

## Aug. 1

• At 5:50 p.m., officers were called about someone trying scam money from Subway in Highlands Plaza.

## Aug. 3

• At 4:42 p.m., offers were called about shoplifting at Christmas Tree on the Hill where about \$65 worth of merchandise was taken.

## Aug. 5

• At 4 p.m., officers were called about someone breaking and entering an unoccupied home on Satulah Road without permission.

## Aug. 6

• At noon, officers responded

to a one-vehicle accident on NC 106 at Potter Lane.

## Aug. 9

• At 6:55 p.m., officers were called about someone communicating threats at a residence on Hickory Hill Road.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from July 27.**

## July 27

• At 8:17 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Sun Ridge Road.

## July 30

• At 12:11 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Clubhouse Trail.

• At 2:25 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 east.

## July 31

• At 11:29 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at VZ Top.

• At 2:10 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Hospital Drive.

• At 2:14 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance for a stranded motorist on N. 4th Street.

## Aug. 1

• At 12:13 p.m., the dept. was first-responders at a residence on US 64 west.

## Aug. 2

• At 1:15 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Copper Drive.

## Aug. 3

• At 2:31 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident at First & Main streets.

## Aug. 4

• At 11:58 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on N. 5th Street.

• At 1:46 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 4:02 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on N.

4th Street.

At 9:46 p.m., the dept. assisted with a missing person in the Franklin area.

## Aug. 5

• At 5:30 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on N. Big Bear Pen Mountain road.

• At 7:25 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 28 South.

• At 10:27 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Falcon Ridge road.

## Aug. 6

• At 11:26 a.m., the dept. responded to a miscellaneous fire at a residence on US 64 west.

• At noon, the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Satulah Ridge Road.

• At 3:46 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on N. 5th Street.

## Aug. 7

• At 4:20 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at VZ Top.

• At 4:38 p.m., the dept. provided a water rescue at 2nd and Spring Street.

• At 4:55 p.m., the dept. rescued a person stranded in water at Highlands Country Club.

• At 6:08 p.m., the dept. assisted a stranded motorist on US 64 west.

• At 7:29 p.m. the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Big View Drive.

• At 9:59 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident at NC 28 South and Rich Gap Road.

## Aug. 8

• At 2:55 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a possible structure fire at a residence on Talley Road.

## Aug. 9

• At 3:48 p.m., the dept. was called about smoke at residence on Netsi Place.

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**...CLASSROOM continued from page 19**

tivities where a mask can interfere with breathing, like playing soccer outdoors, The Mountain will adhere to CDC guidelines.

Just like at Highlands School, upon arrival there will be daily temperature checks and physical distancing during the morning Virtual Academy sessions.

The Virtual Academy will

be held in the dining hall which can accommodate 100 but will only have up to 12 students and adult proctors. There are 16 hand-washing sinks available around the property as well as hand-sanitizer.

"These will be used regularly, and routine disinfection of community spaces is already happening and will continue throughout

the nine weeks," said Wisniewski.

Parents who have enrolled their middle school students in the MCS Virtual Academy and who would like to attend the MCS Virtual Academy at The Mountain should email [ted.wisniewski@the-mountainrlc.org](mailto:ted.wisniewski@the-mountainrlc.org) or call 828-526-8519.

— Kim Lewicki





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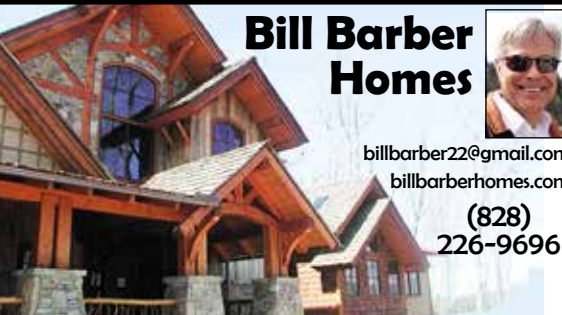


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